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TALKING POINTS

SOVA [REDACTED]  
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28 December 1984

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### Effects of Ustinov's Death

- o It will have little, if any, impact on Soviet policy deliberations for the January talks.

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- The Soviet decision to renew arms discussions was almost certainly made without his participation
- Ustinov might have been in favor of the talks anyway.
- o Choice of Sokolov designed to avoid political controversy while assuring military loyalty to Politburo policy line.
  - Sokolov has shown no signs of wanting to change established policy lines
  - Politburo elders are probably comfortable with a man his age (73)
  - The military are probably glad to get one of their own as leader, even though he has no seat on the Politburo
  - The outspoken Ogarkov, once a contender for the Defense Minister post, has been moved downward in the ministry and out of policy forums.
- o Down the road, Ustinov's absence will be felt in Soviet politics.
  - The vacuum left by his death will probably complicate decisionmaking, and may lead to more political maneuvering
  - Ustinov supported Chernenko in the office of General Secretary, appeared to be allied with Gromyko, and lent tacit support to Gorbachev as eventual successor to the top post.
  - Ustinov was man of vast experience who knew how to reconcile the demands of defense and the civilian economy.

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